

## Sowerby Village C of E VC Primary School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133671
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	316186
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Jones

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Carole Hitchen-Gibbon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gillian Bush
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Sowerby Village Sowerby Bridge West Yorkshire HX6 1HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 831971
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small primary school serves a residential area facing challenging social and economic circumstances. The school's roll has declined in recent years and staff numbers have been reduced as a result. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school holds the Activemark award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. These are pupils' personal development and well-being and the quality of the curriculum. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The school has seen the number on roll and its income decline steadily as birth rates have fallen. It is also suffering additional costs resulting from unforeseen complications that have arisen connected to the school's creation in 2002. This financial burden remains, in spite of savings made, including staff reductions. The school is working tirelessly to improve matters and continues in its negotiations with the local authority. Until the school's financial health is restored, its capacity for future improvement is only satisfactory.

In spite of these setbacks, the school is firmly focused on raising achievement and further improving the personal development of its pupils. The school is cheerful and welcoming and pupils enjoy school. Nearly all participate in the very wide range of activities available to them every afternoon after school. Parents say that, 'Teachers are approachable and sort things out well.' Attendance is below national averages, mainly as a result of parents taking holidays during term time. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy and that the rare cases of bullying or discrimination that do occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively by the staff. Pupils have good awareness of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. There are very good programmes to promote pupils' physical development that have been recognised nationally by the award of the Activemark. The school has worked successfully to improve behaviour, which is now good. Effort, achievement, good attendance and personal qualities are rewarded and celebrated. Pupils' pride and confidence grows as a result. Pupils' contribution to the community is good and they enjoy taking on responsibility and helping others. Pupils have satisfactory skills and abilities to equip them for success in later life. The school ensures that all pupils receive the help they need to improve their basic skills as much as possible.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, pupils' progress is not consistent across the school. It is good in the Foundation Stage and for the school's oldest pupils because they receive the best teaching. In other year groups, the quality of teaching varies and progress is satisfactory as a result. Although standards are below average in Year 6, this still represents satisfactory progress given children's attainment on entry to the school. Pupils reach below average standards by the end of Year 6. The school has introduced mixed-age classes. In these, the work set does not always meet pupils' needs closely enough. This is particularly the case for that more able pupils, who are frustrated by the lack of challenge in their tasks. This impedes their progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the good teaching and personal support they need to progress well at all stages of their education.

The school's curriculum is good and is particularly effective in providing all pupils with additional activities and enjoyable experiences. The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its pupils. There is a strong family atmosphere and the school makes safety a priority. The marking of pupils' work varies in quality and does not always give pupils the advice they need to progress further.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's headteacher has a clear vision for the school based on raising achievement and securing its future. She is supported by the staff who show a willingness to improve their skills and adapt their strategies to meet the challenges they face. Morale is surprisingly good given the uncertainty surrounding future staffing levels.

The school sets targets for pupils, but it does not track progress towards them rigorously enough. Nor are the targets set high enough to ensure good progress. The governing body is effective and highly involved in the school's work. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It is well aware of what it must do to bring about improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Children's abilities in all areas of learning are well below national expectations on joining the Nursery. Staff work well as a team to provide children of all abilities with the well structured and stimulating teaching and experiences they need to make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development and their physical development. Children appreciate the kindness and consideration shown to them by staff, they behave well and clearly enjoy their learning. Many attend school early for the daily 'Teamwork and Calm' sessions provided by the dedicated staff to help children's social development and let them express themselves emotionally and creatively. Children make rapid advances in their physical skills and agility thanks to effective use of the school's well resourced outside play facilities and the excellent specialist teaching provided by the visiting sports coach. Their progress in the areas of reading and writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world is good. However, standards in these areas remain below national expectations for most children and well below for a small number, by the end of Reception.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistent across the school so that pupils achieve as much as possible at each stage of their education.
- Ensure that the work set for the more able pupils is appropriate to their needs and abilities.
- Ensure that all pupils are set challenging targets and that the school has an accurate picture of the progress pupils make towards them.

A small proportion of schools where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement in the school is satisfactory. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are well below national expectations. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage thanks to good teaching. Progress in Years 1 to 4 and for some pupils in Year 5, is only satisfactory as a result of weaknesses in the quality of teaching. The oldest pupils benefit from very good teaching and make good progress to reach standards below national averages by the end of Year 6. However, the more able pupils do not consistently reach higher levels in national assessments and tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the skilled support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are polite and friendly and try hard to make a good impression on visitors. They are aware of the faiths and lifestyles of different cultures and undertake visits to local places of worship. At present, there are not enough links with schools and communities of different ethnic backgrounds to further develop pupils' understanding and knowledge of different cultures. Pupils are involved in a number of fundraising events and expect to serve the community. The active school council runs a thriving Snack Shop and has helped to improve the impressive playground facilities. Pupils take pride in their school and treat the building and resources with respect. They show good awareness of health and safety issues. They are enthusiastic about physical exercise and eat healthily. They seize on the good opportunities to participate in musical and dramatic productions. Many learn to play musical instruments and Year 4 and 5 pupils thoroughly enjoy their weekly violin lessons. Pupils work in teams and make sensible decisions. The very good link with the local high school provides them with further skills and experiences they will need in later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some very good teaching observed. In the best lessons, learning is exciting and the school's good resources are used to inform and stimulate pupils. Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour and good relationships exist between pupils and adults. Discussions are lively and all pupils make confident contributions. Pupils are given the teaching and tasks they need to progress quickly. However, in less effective lessons, pace is lacking and opportunities are missed to motivate and enthuse pupils. Pupils have limited opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills. The teaching for pupils with additional needs and for those of lower abilities is often good. Their individual needs are given careful consideration and the teaching assistants provide effective support and encouragement. Other pupils, particularly the most able, often find the work they are given not sufficiently appropriate or challenging and this slows their progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of the curriculum is good. It contributes significantly to pupils' good personal development. The school's approach of linking subjects together is popular with pupils who say learning is enjoyable. This is not always the case for the more able pupils. Pupils are motivated by active learning that links physical activity to mathematics and by the 'Friday Focus'. This gives learning a practical, hands-on emphasis in a range of subjects. The school has changed the timings of the school day. This has created more time in the afternoon for voluntary enrichment activities for all pupils. This has been a great success and almost all pupils take part in the rich variety of physical, artistic and academic activities that are provided. Their skills, confidence, pride and self-esteem have improved as a result.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school cares for its pupils well. Staff have a good knowledge of the pupils. The school works hard to build relationships with parents and carers, particularly those who are reluctant to be involved in school life. The school's strategies aimed at improving attendance have succeeded in decreasing the numbers of parents who take holidays in term time. Staff are skilled at dealing with the complex needs of many of their pupils and strong bonds of trust and respect develop as a result. Child protection and health and safety arrangements meet local and national guidelines. The school's academic guidance arrangements for pupils are not yet developed enough to clearly show how all pupils progress as they move through the school. Targets are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously. However, it does not always provide sufficient guidance about pupils' next steps in learning or how they can improve and make better progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has worked tirelessly to take the school forward and she provides good leadership. The school has had to react quickly and decisively to reorganise its classes and personnel to meet the challenges it faces. There are clear and detailed plans in place to raise achievement and further improve the school's resources. The school is part of the local authority Intensive Support Programme which aims to boost achievement and this has led to some improvements in standards of reading and writing. There is a comprehensive programme of staff development in place, but this is not yet making enough impact on eradicating relative weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. The school is addressing the ways in which it measures pupils' performance. It has not yet gathered sufficient data to have a detailed picture of how all pupils progress, or to be confident that the targets it sets are challenging enough. The governing body shows great awareness and knowledge of the issues surrounding the school. It carries out its responsibilities very effectively and with great determination.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school recently. I would like to share with you what I found out.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. It is good at making learning enjoyable for most of you, keeping you safe and happy and giving you the chance to help others and take responsibility. You behave well and most of you work hard in lessons. You told me how much you enjoy the afternoon clubs and the visits the school organises to interesting places. You also like sport, particularly when you play in teams in competitions with other schools. Your school council runs the really good Snack Shop for you and has helped to make more improvements to your super playground.

I would like you to do even better with your work and so I have suggested three things that will help. Your teachers work hard to help you learn. I would like the school to make sure that the teaching you receive is as good as it can be in all your lessons. I have also asked your teachers to make sure that the work you are given always challenges you to do as well as you can. Finally, I would like your school to be better at setting you challenging targets and knowing how well you are making progress towards them.

You can help by always trying your best and being positive about your work. Ask for help if you need it. Everyone at Sowerby Village really cares about you and wants you to do as well as you can.